TO THE

Barnard Castle Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1908.

GENTLEMEN,

I.

It gives me much pleasure to report to you a considerable decrease in the number of deaths registered within the Council's area during the year 1908.

During the past year 87 deaths were registered, producing a rate of mortality of 18·57 per 1,000 inhabitants according to the population, estimated to the middle of the year. In this number are included 10 deaths of persons not belonging to the town occurring in the Workhouse and amongst strangers visiting the town ; on the other hand one death of a resident occurring in the Connty Asylum is not included. The actual number of deaths of residents is therefore reduced to 78, which produces an annual death rate of 16·65 per 1,000 of an estimated population of 4,684 inhabitants.

The Infantile deaths were also reduced in number—only 10 cases having been registered under the age of one year, equal to 2·13 per 1,000 of estimated population ; and 91·74 per 1,000 births registered. This is one of the lowest infantile rates in the County of Durham.

Thirty five deaths occurred amongst persons over 65 years of age, the oldest having been a female 92 years old. Fifteen persons died over 80 years of age, the average being 84 years.

Zymotic or Infectious Diseases caused only four deaths, namely :—

Whooping Cough	2 cases
Enteric Fever	1 case
Diarrhœa	1 ,,
Total	4 cases

producing an annual Zymotic death rate of 0·85 per 1,000 of population. The corresponding rate for the county was 2·70 per 1,000.

Diseases of the Respiratory Organs accounted for 12 deaths, producing a rate of 2·56 per 1,000 of population.

I am glad to report a considerable diminution in the number of deaths ascribed to Phthisis and other Tuberculous Diseases—only 8 having been registered as against 19 during the preceding year. The mortality rate from Phthisis alone was 1·28 per 1,000 inhabitants, and from other Tuberculous Diseases only 0·42. The Phthisis death rate for the county was 0·70 per 1,000 of population.

Heart Disease accounted for 20 deaths, or 4·26 per 1,000 of population.

One hundred and nine births were registered during the year, giving a rate of 23·27 per 1,000 of estimated population.

II.

The amount of General Sickness in the town was not excessive. The rate was high during the first two quarters, particularly amongst old people ; it was about the average during the summer and autumn months, and increased again towards the end of the year.

Infectious disease was not very prevalent during the year with the exception of Whooping Cough, which necessitated the closure of the Infant School for a short period and caused 2 deaths.

Nine cases of Infectious Disease were notified to me, namely :—

Erysipelas...	3 cases
Enteric Fever	3 ,,
Scarlet Fever	3 ,,
Total	9 cases.

Of the cases of Enteric Fever two were ascribed to insanitary conditions of the premises occupied by the patients, whilst the third was the case of a Militiaman who had come to the annual training in Camp already with the infection on him.

Of the 3 cases of Scarlet Fever two occurred in the same house—one in April and the other in December—the return case having probably been due to insufficient disinfection of clothing. The third case was imported from the Bishop Auckland district.

Of other notifiable Infectious Diseases Measles occurred in the district during the months of January and February. Whooping Cough was present nearly through the whole year, and Mumps prevailed during the first quarter.

There was not much Diarrhœa amongst children in the town, not even during the autumn months.

With regard to the **Sanitary Condition** of the town and the methods adopted for the preservation of the public health, I have during the past year, assisted by your Inspector, instituted a thorough systematic house to house inspection of the town by devoting to this purpose one day a week. The results of this visitation have from time to time been reported to you, and various deficiencies in sanitary arrangements and in connection with the housing of the Working Classes Act, such as over-crowding, etc., brought before your notice. We have gone over a considerable portion of the town, and I hope by the end of the present year to have completed the entire area. The main defect found was in the continued existence of too many privy middens, which I hope will all in time be converted into proper sanitary water-closets.

The drainage and sewerage of the town have been efficiently supervised and various defects remedied. A new and improved system has been during the past year laid down in connection with the Railway Station.

The Sewage Farm has so far worked satisfactorily and answered all requirements.

The disposal of house refuse has been carried out systematically, but as there is always some difficulty in the provision of refuse tips, I strongly recommend the Council to provide the town with a proper Refuse Destructor, which, I am sure, will not only be beneficial sanitarily to the town, but might also be made a profitable institution.

The house accommodation has continued to increase—7 new buildings have been erected during the year and all are already occupied. Small houses at low rentals are, however, still very much wanted for the working classes.

The water supply of the town has continued to be good and adequate for all requirements.

In connection with the Milk-shops and Dairies Act, I have again made a thorough inspection of all dairies and cowsheds within your area, and found the majority fairly satisfactory.

The newly-formed Bye-Laws come into force this spring, and it will therefore now be easier to work the Act, particularly with regard to the provision of sufficient airspace, in which respect some of the cow-byres were found mainly lacking.

Slaughter-houses, of which there are 9 in the town, were also inspected by myself and your Sanitary Inspector, and most of them found in a satisfactory condition.

The methods of dealing with Infectious Diseases have continued adequate and satisfactory. During the year the Council has carried out my recommendation to provide permanent accommodation for the treatment of cases of Smallpox, by removing one of the wings of the Infectious Hospital to a separate and isolated place. This wing will, during the present year, be replaced by a new building for the treatment of ordinary infectious disease. During the past year your Inspector has likewise had occasion to disinfect 4 infected houses and stove or destroy 4 sets of bedding.

In connection with the Workshops and Factory Act, I made a regular and complete inspection of all Bake-houses, Shops, Outworkers Premises and Factories, and found the majority in a satisfactory state as regards lighting, ventilation, drainage and sanitary arrangements.

During the year the Sanitary Inspector has had occasion to bring the following nuisances to your notice :—

Nuisances in connection with Dwelling-houses (Overcrowding, Structural Defects, etc.)	8 cases
Nuisances connected with Slaughter-houses	3 „
„ „ Ashpits and Privies	15 „
„ from Manure and Refuse	4 „
„ connected with Water-closets	4 „
„ from Defective Yard Paving	8 „
„ in connection with House Drainage	33 „
„ „ Water Supply	22 „
„ from Pigstyes	2 „
„ „ Animals Improperly Kept	5 „
„ Unclassified	4 „
Total	108 cases

All of these, excepting 6, have been remedied.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

ALFRED H. SEVIER,

Medical Officer of Health.

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